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ABSTRACT

This manual guides educational institutions in evaluating themselves according to standards of good practice regarding goals and objectives, utilization of resources, effectiveness, and achievement. Reaccreditation, including a comprehensive self study, is required every 6 years following initial accreditation. The self study is followed by an on-site visit by a team of peers to review the accredited status of a college, with the aim of improving a college's effectiveness in achieving its stated purpose. Intended for use with the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition, this manual provides a reference for the conduct of the comprehensive self study, as well as instruction for the completion and submission of reports to the Commission. The document discusses: (1) comprehensive self study participation, recruitment, preparation, and resources; (2) self study report format, content, and submission; (3) commission standards for institutional mission, integrity, effectiveness, programs, student support, learning resources, faculty and staff, finances, and governance; (4) the evaluation site visit; and (5) reports to the Commission, including midterm, annual, interim substantive change, and show-cause reports. Appendices A through E contain sample certification, documentation for the site visit and a suggested time line. (AS)

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ED 461 404

Guide to Institutional Self Study and Reports to the Commission

1997

Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

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GUIDE TO INSTITUTIONAL SELF STUDY

AND REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

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1997

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

GUIDE TO SELF STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Accreditation as a system of voluntary, non-governmental self regulation is unique to American educational institutions. It is a system by which an institution evaluates itself in accordance with standards of good practice regarding goals and objectives; the appropriateness, sufficiency, and utilization of resources; the usefulness, integrity, and effectiveness of its processes; and the extent to which it is achieving its intended outcomes. It is a process by which educational institutions provide students, the public, and each other with assurances of institutional integrity, quality, and effectiveness. It is a continuing process designed to encourage planning for institutional improvement in quality and effectiveness.

Each institution affiliated with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges accepts the obligation to undergo periodic evaluation through self study and professional peer review. The heart of this obligation is the conducting of a rigorous self study during which an institution appraises itself in terms of its stated purposes. A Comprehensive Self Study is required every six years following initial accreditation. The Commission's policy on periodic review, found in the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition, governs conditions under which an institution is periodically evaluated.

Intended for use with the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition, this Manual provides a reference for the conduct of the comprehensive self study, as well as instructions for the completion and submission of reports to the Commission. Its purpose is to facilitate the process of self study for Colleges as they develop the organization and activities needed to conduct such a self appraisal.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SELF STUDY

The self study, part of an accreditation process that includes an on-site visit by a team of peers and review and decision on the accredited status of the College by the Commission, aims to improve a College's effectiveness in achieving its stated purpose. Thus, the most important use of a self study is by the college itself. In addition, peer assessment of the self study provides the College with a tool for improvement of effectiveness.

Because the self study examines every aspect of institutional functioning against the Commission Standards of good practice in higher education, campus commitment to this process should be universal. As the College organizes itself into study groups whose task it will be to make judgments about the quality of educational programs and services and the integrity of institutional practices, everyone able to do so should participate. Addressing both past and future, the study should include responses to the recommendations of the previous visiting team as well as plans for the future.

Preparation for the self study begins with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the College whose personal involvement and visible support are crucial to the success of the self study. The CEO should ensure that the need for a self study is brought to the attention of the College Community and that an organization for the conduct of the self study is created. This self study process, chaired by an individual or co-chaired by individuals selected by the College, should be an in-depth look at how well the college is meeting its stated objectives.

A former chair of the Accrediting Commission, Thomas Fryer, has suggested that a good self study is "honest, fair-minded, intelligently conducted, carefully planned, sensitive to both internal and external environments, extensively self-evaluative and diagnostic, and owned by <u>everyone</u> in the institution." Acknowledging the complexity of such an undertaking, Fryer concludes that no group or issue should dominate the self study, but, rather, that the self study should set forth both the positive and the negative truths about a college.

Suggestion #1: Selecting someone or some ones to direct the self study and to chair the steering committee

Pick a person or persons with:

- the respect of the college community
- appropriate leadership and interpersonal skills
- enough energy to manage all aspects of the self study

The Steering Committee

Once the chair or co-chairs of the accreditation self study has or have been named, the college creates a steering committee to assist in the overall planning and supervision of the institutional accreditation activities.

The selection process for members of the steering committee should actively involve all constituencies of the college---the Academic Senate, the student organization, classified staff, and members of the administrative team. Since members of the steering committee will often serve as chairs of subcommittees, it is prudent to select individuals recognized for their leadership, knowledge, and cooperative attitudes. Including the individual or individuals who will edit the final draft of the self study is a good idea.

Experience has shown the importance of the steering committee beginning its work knowing that it has both institutional commitment and the whole-hearted support of the CEO and other administrators, as well as independence in gathering data. The committee needs to know it has the logistical support needed to carry out its task.

While the size of the steering committee will vary according to the size of the institution and the number of persons available to serve, to be effective, the size of the committee should be kept to less than fifteen members.

Suggestion #2: Chairing the steering committee

Colleges recently completing self studies have made the following suggestions regarding leadership:

- The chair(s) of the steering committee have sufficient time to assume the responsibilities of leadership.
- The chair(s) of the steering committee should be provided with clerical support
- The chair(s) of the steering committee should be given access to all information

Meetings of the steering committee

Meetings should be scheduled at regular and realistic intervals for presentation of progress reports and preliminary drafts by subcommittees. Because the time needs of subcommittees will vary according to the size of the assigned task, the steering committee chair(s) should maintain a checklist of all assignments and track the progress of each subcommittee.

Participation in the Self Study

Broad involvement in the preparation of the self study insures the credibility and usefulness of the report. Included in the self study document submitted to the Commission is a certification page (Appendix B) bearing the signatures of institutional leaders and attesting to broad participation in self study preparation. The certification page reflects the belief that the Self Study Report accurately portrays the nature and substance of the institution. Since the inclusion of all constituencies of the college insures that the self study does not reflect the exclusive view of any one group, the visiting evaluation team will seek to confirm that all campus elements have participated in the work of the self study.

Students: Student leaders are typically enthusiastic participants on the steering committee, but obtaining broad and representative participation from students is often difficult.

Faculty: All faculty have a major role to play in the self study process. The faculty perspective on the integrity, quality, and effectiveness of the institution is an integral part of the self study document. Include part-time faculty in the process.

Staff: Support staff must be included in the self study. Employees in all quarters of the institution are knowledgeable about the college and can offer a perspective on how the college is functioning in terms of its stated purposes. Recognizing the contributions of this constituency is important, as is including them as active participants in the process.

Administrators: Administrators must share in the work of the self study, collaborating with faculty, staff, and students in the search for the truths about the institution. The perspective of administrators is an important part of a self study.

Trustees: Governing Board participation can take a variety of forms. In some institutions a Board member may be on the steering committee. Progress reports on the self study are a way to secure Board participation. Note that at the conclusion of the self study, the Board must certify participation in the process.

Others: The college may elect to include others in the self study. Members of foundation boards, program advisory committee members, or other volunteers may participate in the process. Care should be taken in these selections to avoid the perception that such individuals represent a small segment of the community.

Recruitment and Formation of the Subcommittees

Dividing the self study into its major components makes the process more manageable. Having a number of subcommittees addressing the standards is a good way to break up the work. The size of the committee varies with the standard to be studied, but insofar as possible, all constituencies should be represented---faculty, administrators, support staff, and students. Members of the public may be included if the college deems this to be desirable. Diversity in all its meanings should be part of the consideration of membership on a subcommittee in order to avoid having all members coming from the same background, point of view, or experience. Subcommittees should include members from areas other than the one under study. For example, the Student Services area should not be studied exclusively by student services staff. It is advisable for the college to allow two or three weeks for the recruitment and formation of these subcommittees.

Suggestion #3: Committee membership

- Capitalize on the college climate and culture to get people involved.
- Those who cannot do big jobs can do a piece of a substandard.
- Explaining what's at stake in accreditation can foster commitment

Chairing the subcommittees

Having steering committee members serve as chairs for the standards is a functional way of lending coherence to the organization of the self study. Creating a system in which one of the members of the subcommittee serves as co-chair further increases participation in the study as well as shares the leadership responsibility. An alternative way to organize is to have steering committee members serve as liaison to the subcommittees, leaving the chairing to members of the subcommittees. In any case, chairs of the subcommittees should bear the responsibility for calling meetings of subcommittee members and for facilitating their work.

Work and meetings of subcommittees

Meetings should be scheduled at regular and realistic intervals for members to discuss their assignments, report on progress, enlist each other's help, and come together as a team working toward the same goal. These meetings offer the opportunity for subcommittee members to learn from one another, share insights and data, and formulate a coherent perspective for their report. Meetings encourage committee members to start to identify and gather materials that will serve as documentation for the self study and which will be provided to the visiting team.

A written record should be kept of all meetings with copies sent to the chair(s) of the steering committee. Subcommittees should expect their work to take several months, depending on the size and complexity of the institution.

Suggestion #4: Producing materials

- Simplify the editing process by having each subcommittee submit drafts using a commonly-agreed-upon word processing package and style.

- A written description of the responsibilities of the steering committee and the subcommittees helps clarify who is supposed to be doing what.

- Copies of appropriate sections from the Guide to Self Study such as the "Format and Content" section helps.

- Each committee should have a"toolbox" of information such as the Standards and the team report from the last visit.

Calendar for Preparation of the Self Study

The steering committee needs to establish a realistic and detailed timetable for the organization and completion of the self study. In most instances, at least a year and a half should be allowed and, for many colleges, there is an advantage in beginning the activities a full four semesters before the scheduled visitation. The date for the evaluation visit is often set more than a year in advance and institutions should adhere to the established date. Only under very special circumstances should an institution request a postponement or delay.

Back to the future, or counting backwards

A convenient and effective method for establishing a calendar is to work back from the date set for the team visit. In this way, the steering committee can set target dates for the completion of activities and can better estimate the amount of time necessary for meeting goals. This activity encourages members of subcommittees to allow sufficient time for their activities. Note that the completed self study must be in the hands of the Commission and the team members forty-five days before the scheduled visit date.

The steering committee must establish a working calendar that provides the framework for the activities of the self study process. Since the majority of the individuals involved in creating the self study are faculty, the academic calendar of the institution needs to be taken into account because the timetable will be affected by official school holidays, recesses, and the summer periods when faculty are not on campus.

> *Suggestion #5:* ***Calendar Preparation:*** *Since this calendar will be provided as evidence of preparation, be sure to get it all on paper and distribute it generously. Selecting chairs and committee members may take a while. Plan on at least two weeks for this activity.*

Several target dates should be kept in mind while planning the calendar. A final date for submission of completed materials to the steering committee should be set. This date should allow at least a month for final editing and rewriting. The work of the editor(s) should produce a document that is coherent in its presentation and that reflects the intent of the steering committee. Time should be allowed for final drafts to be reviewed by the steering committee and other members of the college community so that the contents of the published document contain no surprises.

Consultation with whomever is to print or duplicate the study will assist in planning the length of time needed to print or duplicate, collate, bind, deliver, and mail the document. Allow at least 30 working days for these activities.

> Suggestion #6: *In order to spread the work around, the editor(s) should assume responsibility for this activity before the editing task even begins.*

A self study timetable could look like the example found in Appendix E. It should, of course, have more detail. A longer time frame can also be used.

Resources for the Self Study

Since evaluation and planning are continuous activities complementing and supporting the self study, the Accrediting Commission encourages institutions to integrate the self study with ongoing evaluation and planning, making the six year self study a culminating activity rather than an activity undertaken only in the last few months before a team visit.

A primary goal of the self study should be to provide evidence of institutional effectiveness. This requires that the study include data on students and their learning outcomes. While the reference list at the end of this guide includes specific information useful in this regard, all research and other activities reporting student outcomes done by the institution (formal and informal) since the last visit should be grist for this mill. Reviewing the document titled *Institutional Effectiveness* found in Appendix G will assist in focusing on issues of verifying effectiveness.

Guidance for qualitative data can be found in the Commission policies contained in the Handbook on Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition. While these policies are not standards in and of themselves, they are resources for statements of good practice and may suggest evaluative questions an institution could use as guides in the self study process. Appendix H contains a *Statement on Diversity*; it can guide the self study on issues dealing with diversity.

Another source of data on outcomes can be found in public institutions and institutions that are part of a system because they generate considerable information in the form of reports to system, state, or federal authorities. Vocational, specially-funded, or specially-accredited programs, for example, sometimes have reporting requirements that generate valuable data on outcomes.

Because institutions must generate and utilize information in ways and forms that are most useful to them in meeting their institutional purposes, the Commission is more interested in how colleges integrate information into their planning process than in the compilation of unanalyzed reports. Creating new reports specifically for the self study is not necessary.

Most institutions routinely and systematically analyze local and regional demographic data. City and county planning offices, associations of regional governments, state government, U.S. census, local school districts, public utilities, business and trade organizations, and other planning interests commonly produce much pertinent data.

In an effort to provide a forum in which individuals and institutions may profit from the experiences of others, the Commission presents self study workshops each year that are designed to assist institutions as they begin to develop their self studies. Participants in these workshops are shown a video on the self study process designed to assist them in understanding the accreditation process, policies, and standards. They also examine and discuss self studies submitted by other colleges. This forum offers an opportunity for a good deal of interaction with Commission staff and with individuals from other colleges who have experience in conducting self studies. The individuals who are charged with directing the self study should attend this workshop.

The Accreditation Liaison Officer as a Resource

The Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) is the individual appointed by the College to serve as the contact between the campus and the Commission. The ALO assumes responsibility for:

1. Staying informed on policies and procedures related to accreditation and keeping the CEO informed on all relevant activities and information
2. Acting as the institutional contact person with the Commission
3. Providing continuity to campus accreditation process by maintaining files of previous accreditations, including all self studies, related correspondence, and other pertinent materials
4. Assisting in preparation and submission of the annual report, notifying the Commission of any substantive changes and reporting on progress toward meeting the recommendations of the most recent evaluation team
5. Coordinating the institutional accreditation activities in advance of evaluation visits, and assisting with follow up activities

Suggestion #7: ***The training video:*** *The Commission's video on accreditation is an excellent tool for presenting the whole process to the campus. It explores in detail what accreditation is, what the standards are, and what constitutes a self study. It is available to all institutions and can be copied as needed on campus.*

Suggestion #8: ***A source of expertise:*** *A resource sometimes overlooked on campuses are those who have served on evaluation teams to other colleges. They are people who have first hand and valuable experience. Enlist their support.*

THE COMPREHENSIVE SELF STUDY REPORT

The self study should be organized according to the numbered and/or lettered elements in the standards and should provide evidence that the level of quality and excellence defined by the institution is being met. It should include a description of what the College is doing, an assessment of how the College is doing, and an action plan for addressing issues raised in the appraisal. Detailed information is found in the section below titled *Format and Content Guide for Comprehensive Study Report*.

> *A tip: The self study document should be:*
> - *concise and present adequate documentation and analysis*
> - *well written, readable, and understandable to a group of peers who have no knowledge of your institution*
> - *clear in its analyses and conclusions*

In short, the self study should deal thoroughly with all the requirements of the Standards in a way that allows the visiting team to evaluate the institution in relation to these standards. It should provide evidence of outcomes that demonstrate candidly how effective the institution really is.

The self study should say to the visiting team, "We have described ourselves clearly and candidly. Here is who we are. Study us, give us your reactions, and tell us how accurately we have appraised our performance".

A suggestion for a self study checklist of activities needed to be accomplished can be found in Appendix F.

A Reminder:

Commission staff are available to answer questions and to provide assistance on a regular basis. Staff can be reached at the Accrediting Commission office at 707-569-9177. On request, Commission staff also provide self study workshops at individual campuses. These can be tailored to fit the needs of the campus.

Format and Content for the Comprehensive Self Study Report

1. Cover Sheet. The cover sheet should include the name and address of the institution, a notation that the self study is in support of an application for candidacy, accreditation, or reaffirmation, and date submitted. See Appendix A.

2. Table of Contents.

3. Certification of the Self Study Report. The Certification of the Self Study Report indicates to the Commission that there was broad participation by the various constituencies of the campus community in preparing the report of institutional self study. This participation by administrators, faculty, and support staff, together with appropriate involvement of trustees, students and the public, documents that the report accurately reflects the nature and substance of the institution. See Appendix B.

4. Abstract of the Report. The Abstract should be a summary statement not more than four to six pages long. It should describe briefly the important educational program and institutional developments since the acceptance for candidacy or since the last evaluation team visit. Compliance with each applicable standard, the major challenges facing the institution, and the planning activities should be summarized in a few paragraphs.

5. Organization for the Self Study. In narrative or chart form, the organization established to conduct the self study should be shown. Committees, their chairpersons and members, timetable, and the person(s) responsible for the overall direction of the self study should be included.

6. Descriptive background and demographics. A concise and factual description of the institution since the last evaluation should be provided. Demographic material should include summary data on the area served, enrollment figures, and student and staff diversity, including trends and available projections. Studies that provide detailed information of this kind should be referenced and made available to the visiting team. This information can be included in the self study or presented separately if you already produce the data for some other purpose.

7. Organization of the Institution. Organization charts for the institution and for each major function should be included. Names of individuals holding each position should be provided.

8. Certification of continued compliance with Eligibility Requirements.
The institution should summarize the review conducted to verify that it continues to meet eligibility requirements. A separate committee could do this task. Specific guidance for this requirement can be found in The Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition, pp. 9-16. These pages include the requirements themselves as well as what documents are needed to verify continued eligibility. A statement for each of the 20 elements should be developed and a statement signed by the President and the Chair of the Governing Board included. **Do not do an entire eligibility report; simply document that the college continues to meet the requirements.**

9. Responses to Recommendations from the Most Recent Evaluation.
If the institution has had a previous evaluation visit, the report must include a section which concisely indicates what has been done regarding recommendations made in the last team report. Recommendations represent the observations and analyses of a visiting team at the time of visit, and should be considered in light of the Commission's standards and the institution's educational purposes. A college may concur or disagree with any or all of the recommendations. If it disagrees, a rationale for the institutional course of action should be offered. Evaluation team members have an explicit responsibility to validate the institution's responses to previous recommendations.

10. Institutional Self-Evaluation Using Commission Standards.

The primary portion of a self study reviews institutional performance using the accreditation standards. Each standard is addressed in turn, using a three part format:

Descriptive summary. This section should succinctly state how the college meets the standard. These descriptive materials should delineate the programs, activities, and processes in which the institution engages.

Self evaluation. The self evaluation section is the most important part of the self study report. Here, the institution moves beyond description to analyze and systematically evaluate itself in terms of the standard and reports the results of its institutional assessments.

The Commission does not endorse or prefer any single approach or method of assessing institutional effectiveness. However, the Commission does expect that every institution will undertake a systematic assessment of student outcomes, consistent with its resources and capabilities. The institution should utilize those models, instruments, or techniques of assessment that will enable it to make well founded evaluative comments regarding the outcomes of its programs, services and processes.

This section shows the institution's success in meeting its stated outcomes, identifies areas of concern, and systematically assesses student achievement. The self-evaluation is based on profiles of evidence gathered and developed by the institution. The institutional self study is expected to include a description of the means by which its effectiveness is evaluated and how student academic achievement is documented.

The self evaluation section for each standard should include more than statements of compliance. It should provide the evidence on which the evaluative conclusions are based and the context in which the analysis occurred. If an institution finds a certain standard inappropriate or inapplicable, explanation or justification for deviation rests with the institution.

Planning Agenda. When an institution describes and evaluates its programs and services with reference to each standard, areas in need of change are identified. The planning agenda sections for each subsection of the standard should forecast progress the institution expects to make. **The statements the institution makes in this section are its recommendations to itself**. The planning agenda sections should include the following elements:

- Statements of the plans, activities, and processes the institution expects to implement, a statement of what the institution thinks it will do.
- Discussion of the ways the areas identified will be incorporated into the ongoing, systematic evaluation and planning processes of the institution.
- Discussion of how the outcomes of these plans, activities and processes are expected to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness.

11. Planning summary.

This section should be a concise summary of planning areas identified by the institution. This statement should indicate how the institution proposes to integrate all of the planning recommendations it has made to itself into a comprehensive agenda. The summary should provide a coherent, even thematic, guide for future institutional activities.

12. Special Addendum for international operations for non-U.S. Nationals.
If an institution engages in international operations, an addendum demonstrating how the international operation conforms to Commission policies is required. Refer to the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition for the applicable policies: *Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Activities for Non-U.S. Nationals, Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations,* and *Accreditation and Nontraditional Study.*

13. Supplemental Documents Available in the Team Room.
Documents available to the visiting team should include the unedited, primary data and reports on which the Self Study Report is based. When documents are cited in the Report, they should be indexed by standard for easy reference by team members. Suggestions for supporting documents are listed for each standard in Appendix C.

SUBMISSION OF THE SELF STUDY REPORT

After certification by college constituencies and the president of the governing board, four copies of the report, four catalogs, and four class schedules should be sent to the Accrediting Commission office. A copy of the report, a catalog, and a schedule should be sent to each member of the evaluation team. This distribution should occur at least 45 days prior to the scheduled evaluation visit. Copies of the Self Study Report should be made available to members of the college community and to the governing board.

COMMISSION STANDARDS

The Commission standards describe good practice in community and junior college education. They are standards based on experience, research, and extensive consultation with member institutions. The standards center on outcomes and accomplishments, requiring that an institution assess its resources, processes, and practices. In short, the Standards focus on assessing institutional effectiveness in meeting institutional purposes. Institutions can assess effectiveness in achieving its objectives through the use of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and procedures.

STANDARD ONE: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution, its educational purposes, its students, and its place in the higher education community.

1. The institution has a statement of mission, adopted by the governing board, which identifies the broad-based educational purposes it seeks to achieve.

2. The mission statement defines the students the institution intends to serve as well as the parameters under which programs can be offered and resources allocated.

3. Institutional planning and decision making are guided by the mission statement.

4. The institution evaluates and revises its mission statement on a regular basis.

Tips for Standard One: This standard asks that the college review its mission statement carefully. Here are some ideas:

Review the college mission statement carefully.

What does the statement say?

Does it fit the criteria of the standard?

When was it last reviewed?

Does it need to be modified?

Remember to provide specific evidence for all assertions.

If the college is part of a multi-college district/system, look at the district/system mission statement for comparison.

STANDARD TWO: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The institution subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates honesty and truthfulness in representations to its constituencies and the public; in pursuit of truth and the dissemination of knowledge; in its treatment of and respect for administration, faculty, staff, and students; in the management of its affairs and in relationships with its accreditation association and other external agencies.

1. The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to its constituencies, the public, and prospective students through its catalogues, publications, and statements, including those presented in electronic formats. Precise, accurate, and current information is provided in the catalog concerning (a) educational purposes; (b) degrees, curricular offerings, educational resources, and course offerings; © student fees and other financial obligations, student financial aid, and fee refund policies; (d) requirements for admission and for achievement of degrees, including the academic calendar and information regarding program length; and (e) the names of administrators, faculty, and governing board.

2. The institution has a readily available governing board-adopted policy protecting academic freedom and responsibility which states the institutional commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and fosters the integrity of the teaching-learning process.

3. Faculty and other college staff distinguish between personal conviction and proven conclusions and present relevant data fairly and objectively to students and others.

4. Institutions which strive to instill specific beliefs or world views or to require codes of conduct of faculty, administrative and support staff, or students give clear prior notice of such policies.

5. The institution provides faculty and students with clear expectations concerning the principles of academic honesty and the sanctions for violation.

6. The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

7. The institution demonstrates honesty and integrity in its athletic programs.

8. The institution demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with the Commission and agrees to comply with Commission standards, policies, guidelines, public disclosure, and self study requirements.

9. The institution regularly evaluates and revises institutional policies, practices, and publications to ensure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Tips for Standard 2: The essence of this standard has to do with integrity and honesty in all areas of institutional operations. Here are some things to think about and do regarding this standard.

Gather together examples of materials that are presented to the public regarding the College---brochures, pamphlets, fliers, etc.--and see if they accurately reflect the college's identity and its practices and check to see if these publications have been recently updated.

Hold the catalog up to scrutiny in terms of the standard criteria.

If the college has a web page, include an assessment of it as regards the spirit of this standard.

Review the policy on academic freedom, asking if it meets the standard.

Concerns about equity and diversity will come up in several places in the self study. Review such things as the Student Equity plan, the ways in which diversity is addressed in the curriculum, hiring practices for all college staff, policy on access and retention, special programs for under represented and disabled students, and Affirmative Action policies.

Identify what the college policy on student conduct is and provide evidence that it is clearly available to students.

Ask what the college says and does about academic dishonesty and show how this is communicated to both the faculty and students.

Review all athletic programs, citing how the college demonstrates that athletics are free from practices lacking in integrity.

Talk with the Accreditation Liaison Officer and the president to find out about the relationship between the college and the commission.

STANDARD THREE: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution, appropriate to its mission and purposes as a higher education institution, develops and implements a broad-based and integrated system of research, evaluation, and planning to assess institutional effectiveness and uses the results for institutional improvement. The institution identifies institutional outcomes which can be validated by objective evidence.

A. Institutional Research and Evaluation

A.1 Institutional research is integrated with and supportive of institutional planning and evaluation.

A.2 The institution provides the necessary resources for effective research and evaluation.

A.3 The institution has developed and implemented the means for evaluating how well, and in what ways, it accomplishes its mission and purposes.

A.4 The institution provides evidence that its program evaluations lead to improvement of programs and services.

B. Institutional Planning

B.1 The institution defines and publishes its planning processes and involves appropriate segments of the college community in the development of institutional plans.

B.2 The institution defines and integrates its evaluation and planning processes to identify priorities for improvement.

B.3 The institution engages in systematic and integrated educational, financial, physical, and human resources planning and implements changes to improve programs and services.

C. Institutional Outcomes Assessment

C.1 The institution specifies intended institutional outcomes and has clear documentation of their achievement.

C.2 The institution uses information from its evaluation and planning activities to communicate matters of quality assurance to the public.

C.3 The institution systematically reviews and modifies, as appropriate, its institutional research efforts, evaluation processes, institutional plans, and planning processes to determine their ongoing utility for assessing institutional effectiveness.

Tips for Standard Three: The intent of this standard is to have the college look at how and what research is being done, how this research integrates with evaluation and planning, what the institution is doing about planning, and how the institution is assessing its outcomes.

Here are some things to consider:

Show how the research function supports the planning and self-assessment functions of the college.

Demonstrate how the research being done provides evidence of student success such as degree and certificate completion, transfers, or other measures that demonstrate achievement.

Describe how the program review process works and demonstrate that it is improving programs and student services.

Look at the who, what, when, where of the planning process, including evidence for how planning integrates college functions and improves programs and services.

Show how the college documents outcomes and how this evidence is communicated to others. For example, does the college publish a Fact Book?

Describe the process used by the college in evaluating its research, plans, and planning process.

STANDARD FOUR: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The institution offers collegiate level programs in recognized fields of study that culminate in identified student competencies leading to degrees and certificates. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all educational activities offered in the name of the institution, regardless of where or how presented, or by whom taught.

A. General Provisions

A.1 The institution seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with its institutional mission and purposes and the demographics and economics of its community.

A.2 Programs and courses leading to degrees are offered in a manner which provides students the opportunity to complete the program as announced, within a reasonable time.

A.3 When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.

A.4 The institution provides sufficient human, financial, and physical (including technological) resources to support its educational programs and to facilitate achievement of the goals and objectives of those programs regardless of the service location or instructional delivery method.

A.5 The institution designs and maintains academic advising programs to meet student needs for information and advice and adequately informs and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.

B. Degree and Certificate Programs

B.1 The institution demonstrates that its degrees and programs, wherever and however offered, support the mission of the institution. Degree and certificate programs have a coherent design and are characterized by appropriate length, breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, synthesis of learning, and use of information and learning resources.

B.2 The institution identifies its degrees and certificates in ways which are consistent with the program content, degree objectives, and student mastery of knowledge and skills including, where appropriate, career preparation and competencies.

B.3 The institution identifies and makes public expected learning outcomes for its degree and certificate programs. Students completing programs demonstrate achievement of those stated learning outcomes.

B.4 All degree programs are designed to provide students a significant introduction to the broad areas of knowledge, their theories and methods of inquiry, and focused study in at least one area of inquiry or established interdisciplinary core.

B.5 Students completing degree programs demonstrate competence in the use of language and computation

B.6 The institution documents the technical and professional competence of students completing its vocational and occupational programs.

C. General Education

C.1 The institution requires of all degree programs a component of general education that is published in clear and complete terms in its general catalog.

C.2 The general education component is based on a philosophy and rationale that are clearly stated. Criteria are provided by which the appropriateness of each course in the general education component is determined.

C.3 The general education program introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. The general education program provides the opportunity for students to develop the intellectual skills, information technology facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and an appreciation for cultural diversity that will make them effective learners and citizens.

C.4 Students completing the institution's general education program demonstrate competence in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis/logical thinking.

D. Curriculum and Instruction

D.1 The institution has clearly defined processes for establishing and evaluating all of its educational programs. These processes recognize the central role of faculty in developing, implementing, and evaluating the educational programs. Program evaluations are integrated into overall institutional evaluation and planning and are conducted on a regular basis.

D.2 The institution ensures the quality of instruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness of all of its courses and programs regardless of service location or instructional delivery method.

D.3 The evaluation of student learning and the award of credit are based upon clearly stated and published criteria. Credit awarded is consistent with student learning and is based upon generally accepted norms or equivalencies.

D.4 The institution has clearly stated transfer of credit policies. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the credits accepted, including those for general education, achieve educational objectives comparable to its own courses. Where patterns of transfer between institutions are established, efforts are undertaken to formulate articulation agreements.

D.5 The institution utilizes a range of delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the needs of its students

D.6 The institution provides evidence that all courses and programs, both credit and non-credit, whether conducted on or off-campus by traditional or non-traditional delivery systems, are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures. This provision applies to continuing and community education, contract and other special programs conducted in the name of the institution.

D.7 Institutions offering curricula through electronic delivery systems operate in conformity with applicable Commission policies and statements on Principles of Good Practice in Distance Education.

D.8 Institutions offering curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals operate in conformity with applicable Commission policies and guidelines.

Tips for Standard Four: This standard invites a detailed look at the educational programs of the college. It involves a good deal of work and should be supported by a committee of a size sufficient to explore all of the elements covered here.

A basic idea: Remember that saying the college does something is not enough: demonstrate it with data.

Some other ideas:

Locate demographic and economic data for the district, or for feeder areas if in a multi-college district. Are these the students being served?

A student survey might be conducted to query students about programs, and courses, and how well these are scheduled. Since other information from students might be useful, work with the folks doing other standards.

The college catalog and schedules of classes for several semesters will be good sources of information in dealing with both the depth and breadth of courses offered by the college as well as a source of evidence for how they are being scheduled.

Interviews with the chief instructional officer, deans, faculty leaders of programs, and support staff will help find evidence regarding funding and staffing.

Appropriate staff can review how the counseling process works, and provide with information on what kinds of materials are used to guide students through an understanding of programs, courses, and degrees. Document the assessment devices used to determine how well these processes work.

Regarding degrees and certificates, following the creation of a degree or certificate from its beginning to its acceptance by the college will illuminate what you will need to know in determining if the college is in compliance with the expectation of the Commission.

Determine what the college knows about the competence of its students in terms of stated learning objectives in degree programs, as well as competence in language and computational skills.

Collect and review program review materials, looking for evidence that these outcomes have been tied to curriculum and instructional planning.

Interview the articulation officer for data on transfer and articulation agreements.

If offering courses in a distance education mode, be sure to review Commission policy. The same is true if programs are being offered in other locations, foreign or domestic.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

The institution recruits and admits students appropriate to its programs. It identifies and serves the diverse needs of its students with educational programs and learning support services, and it fosters a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, and success.

1. The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission and appropriate to its programs and follows practices that are consistent with those policies.

2. The institution provides to all prospective and currently enrolled students current and accurate information about its programs, admissions policies and graduation requirements, social and academic policies, refund policies, student conduct standards, and complaint and grievance procedures.

3. The institution identifies the educational support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

4. The institution involves students, as appropriate, in planning and evaluating student support and development services.

5. Admissions and assessment instruments and placement practices are designed to minimize test and other bias and are regularly evaluated to assure effectiveness.

6. The institution provides appropriate, comprehensive, reliable, and accessible services to its students regardless of service location or delivery method.

7. The institution, in keeping with its mission, creates and maintains a campus climate which serves and supports its diverse student population.

8. The institution supports a co-curricular environment that fosters intellectual, ethical, and personal development for all of its students and encourages personal and civic responsibility.

9. Student records are maintained permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained.

10. The institution systematically evaluates the appropriateness, adequacy, and effectiveness of its student services and uses the results of the evaluation as a basis for improvement.

Tips for Standard Five: This standard is devoted to issues concerning the services provided to students as they move through the educational experience. The challenge to the college is to evaluate its policies and practices in supporting students in all aspects of the collegiate experience.

Some suggestions:

Document that the practices of the college are consistent with what policies state.

Don't forget to look at student orientation materials if the college uses them. A Student Handbook, for example, may be a good source of information on what students are told. Is the college, in fact doing what it says it does?

A Survey of Student Perceptions of such things as campus climate, co-curricular activities, student roles in college governance, and general services might prove insightful. Factor the time it takes to do such a survey into the plans and bear in mind the pitfalls and benefits of surveys.

Report outcomes of program review of student services, particularly as they relate to planning.

Many of the items in this standard have a direct relationship with the elements of a typical Matriculation Plan (California Community Colleges). If the college has such a plan, it would be very helpful to review it for content, procedures, and practices. If the college has undergone a Matriculation Site visit, some useful data will be found in the report developed preparatory to the visit.

STANDARD SIX: INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Information and learning resources and services are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currentness to support the institution's intellectual and cultural activities and programs in whatever format and wherever they are offered. The institution provides training so that information and learning resources may be used effectively and efficiently.

1. Information and learning resources, and any equipment needed to access the holdings of libraries, media centers, computer centers, databases and other repositories are sufficient to support the courses, programs, and degrees wherever offered.

2. Appropriate educational equipment and materials are selected, acquired, organized, and maintained to help fulfill the institution's purposes and support the educational program. Institutional policies and procedures ensure faculty involvement.

3. Information and learning resources are readily accessible to students, faculty, and administrators.

4. The institution has professionally qualified staff to provide appropriate support to users of information and learning resources, including training in the effective application of information technology to student learning.

5. The institution provides sufficient and consistent financial support for the effective maintenance, security, and improvement of its information and learning resources.

6. When the institution relies on other institutions or other sources for information and learning resources to support its educational programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate, easily accessible, and utilized.

7. The institution plans for and systematically evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of its learning and information resources and services and makes appropriate changes as necessary.

Tips for Standard Six: This Standard focuses on the resources devoted to libraries, learning resource activities, and information technologies. It asks the college to assess the quality of the support these services are providing to the intellectual and cultural life of the institution.

Some suggestions:

Because learning resources have become synonymous with technologies of many kinds, activities undertaken will have to include evaluation of the technical aspects of libraries, media centers, and computer centers.

Review the decision making process in acquiring educational equipment and materials; it well help in determining if they support the college mission.

Interview learning resources staff regarding funding and staffing.

Provide evidence on how information and learning resources are being used by students, as well as how they are being maintained.

STANDARD SEVEN: FACULTY AND STAFF

The institution has sufficient qualified full-time and part-time faculty and staff to support its educational programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds by making positive efforts to foster such diversity.

A. Qualifications and Selection

A.1 The institution has sufficient faculty and staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to support its programs and services.

A.2 Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selecting all personnel are clearly stated, public, directly related to institutional objectives, and accurately reflect job responsibilities.

A.3 Criteria for selecting faculty include knowledge of the subject matter or service to be performed, effective teaching, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution.

A.4 Degrees held by faculty and administrators are listed in the institution's primary catalog. All U.S. degrees are from institutions accredited by recognized accrediting agencies. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.

B. Evaluation

B.1 The evaluation of each category of staff is systematic and conducted at stated intervals. The follow-up of evaluations is formal and timely.

B.2 Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness and encourage improvement.

B.3 Criteria for evaluation of faculty include teaching effectiveness, scholarship or other activities appropriate to the area of expertise, and participation in institutional service or other institutional responsibilities.

C. Staff Development

C.1 The institution provides appropriate opportunities to all categories of staff for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission.

C.2 Planning and evaluation of staff development programs include the participation of staff who participate in, or are affected by, the programs.

D. General Personnel Provisions

D.1 The institution has and adheres to written policies ensuring fairness in all employment procedures.

D.2 The institution regularly assesses and reports its achievement of its employment equity objectives, consistent with the institutional mission.

D.3 Personnel policies and procedures affecting all categories of staff are systematically developed, clear, equitably administered, and available for information and review.

D.4 The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Personnel records are private, accurate, complete, and permanent.

Tips for Standard Seven: This standard asks for assessment of faculty and staff in terms of their qualification and selection and their evaluation. It also asks for evaluation of professional development activities and personnel policies.

Some suggestions:

Review full-time/part-time faculty ratios, personnel processes, and all hiring practices.

Review and report on evidence of equity in employment.

If in a multi-college district/system, utilize information provided by the Human Resources Department regarding processes and policies.

Evaluation procedures for both faculty and staff should be fully documented, tying the outcomes of these processes to the standard and to the college mission.

STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The institution has sufficient and appropriate physical resources to support its purposes and goals.

1. The institution ensures that adequate physical resources are provided to support its educational programs and services wherever and however they are offered.

2. The management, maintenance, and operation of physical facilities ensure effective utilization and continuing quality necessary to support the programs and services of the institution.

3. Physical facilities at all site locations where courses, programs, and services are offered are constructed and maintained in accordance with the institution's obligation to ensure access, safety, security, and a healthful environment.

4. Selection, maintenance, inventory and replacement of equipment are conducted systematically to support the educational programs and services of the institution.

5. Physical resource planning and evaluation support institutional goals and are linked to other institutional planning and evaluation efforts, including district or system planning and utilization where appropriate.

Tips for Standard Eight: This Standard requires that the college review the quality of its facilities and their maintenance. It asks that the college look at equipment issues both on and off campus, as well as planning and evaluation.

Some Suggestions:

The maintenance and operations department should have a good deal of data for use.

Review the master plan for development of the campus.

Note the construction of new buildings if such has occurred.

Check to determine if there is a recent equipment inventory and determine what policy exists for replacement.

Determine what off-campus facilities are currently in use.

Verify how the college determines whether or not its physical resources are effective in supporting student learning.

Document college policies and processes having to do with safety and security issues.

STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The institution has adequate financial resources to achieve, maintain, and enhance its programs and services. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of financial viability and institutional improvement. The institution manages its financial affairs with integrity, consistent with its educational objectives.

A. Financial Planning

A.1 Financial planning supports institutional goals and is linked to other institutional planning efforts.

A.2 Annual and long-range financial planning reflects realistic assessments of resource availability and expenditure requirements. In those institutions which set tuition rates, and which receive a majority of funding from student fees and tuition, charges are reasonable in light of the operating costs, services to be rendered, equipment, and learning resources to be supplied.

A.3 Annual and long-range capital plans support educational objectives and relate to the plan for physical facilities.

A.4 Institutional guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget development are clearly defined and followed.

A.5 Administrators, faculty, and support staff have appropriate opportunities to participate in the development of financial plans and budgets.

B. Financial Management

B.1 The financial management system creates appropriate control mechanisms and provides dependable and timely information for sound financial decision-making.

B.2 Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support institutional programs and services. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive and timely.

B.3 The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, externally-funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments.

B.4 Auxiliary activities and fund raising efforts support the programs and services of the institution, are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, and are conducted with integrity.

B.5 Contractual agreements with external entities are governed by institutional policies and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution.

B.6 Financial management is regularly evaluated and the results are used to improve the financial management system.

C. Financial Stability

C.1 Future obligations are clearly identified and plans exist for payment.

C.2 The institution has policies for appropriate risk management.

C.3 Cash flow arrangements or reserves are sufficient to maintain stability.

C.4 The institution has a plan for responding to financial emergencies or unforeseen occurrences.

Tips for Standard Nine: This standard requires the college to review its processes regarding financial planning, financial management, and financial stability. This standard may seem complex because finances are often not well understood by everyone. Take your time, be patient.

Some Suggestions:

Document how financial planning is tied to programs and services of the college.

Review college (and district if in a multi-college district) policies and procedures for budget development, including evidence on how the college community participates in this development.

Interview members of the committees charged with financial planning to determine how the committee is functioning.

Document evaluation of financial planning and management practices.

Verify the integrity of the management of finances of programs that are externally funded.

Look carefully at the process by which contractual agreements are developed, the conduct of audits, and use of auxiliary funds.

If the college has a foundation, find out how its financial affairs are conducted.

STANDARD TEN: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The institution has a governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the institution. The institution has an administrative staff of appropriate size to enable the institution to achieve its goals and is organized to provide appropriate administrative services. Governance structures and systems ensure appropriate roles for the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students, and facilitate effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

A. Governing Board

A.1 The governing board is an independent policy-making board capable of reflecting the public interest in board activities and decisions. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.

A.2 The governing board ensures that the educational program is of high quality, is responsible for overseeing the financial health and integrity of the institution, and confirms that institutional practices are consistent with the board-approved institutional mission statement and policies.

A.3 The governing board establishes broad institutional policies and appropriately delegates responsibility to implement these policies. The governing board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.

A.4 In keeping with its mission, the governing board selects and evaluates the chief executive officer and confirms the appointment of other major academic and administrative officers.

A.5 The size, duties, responsibilities, ethical conduct requirements, structure and operating procedures, and processes for assessing the performance of the governing board are clearly defined and published in board policies or by-laws. The board acts in a manner consistent with them.

A.6 The governing board has a program for new member orientation and governing board development.

A.7 The board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.

B. Institutional Administration and Governance

B.1 The institutional chief executive officer provides effective leadership to define goals, develop plans, and establish priorities for the institution.

B.2 The institutional chief executive officer efficiently manages resources, implements priorities controlling budget and expenditures, and ensures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and board policies.

B.3 The institution is administratively organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. The administration provides effective and efficient leadership and management which makes possible an effective teaching and learning environment.

B.4 Administrative officers are qualified by training and experience to perform their responsibilities and are evaluated systematically and regularly. The duties and responsibilities of institutional administrators are clearly defined and published.

B.5 Administration has a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance.

B.6 Faculty have a substantive and clearly-defined role in institutional governance, exercise a substantial voice in matters of educational program and faculty personnel, and other institutional polices which relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.

B.7 Faculty have established an academic senate or other appropriate organization for providing input regarding institutional governance. In the case of private colleges, the institution has a formal process for providing input regarding institutional governance.

B.8 The institution has written policy which identifies appropriate institutional support for faculty participation in governance and delineates the participation of faculty on appropriate policy, planning, and special purpose bodies.

B.9 The institution clearly states and publicizes the role of staff in institutional governance.

B.10 The institution clearly states and publicizes the role of students in institutional governance.

C. Multi-College Districts and/or Systems

C.1 The district/system chief executive officer provides effective leadership to define goals, develop plans, and establish priorities for the institution.

C.2 The district/system chief executive officer efficiently manages resources, implements priorities controlling budget and expenditures, and ensures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and board policies.

C.3 The district/system has a statement which clearly delineates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system and those of the college.

C.4 The district/system provides effective services that support the mission and functions of the college.

C.5 The district/system and the college(s) have established and utilize effective methods of communication and exchange information in a timely and efficient manner.

C.6 The district/system has effective processes in place for the establishment and review of policy, planning, and financial management.

Tips for Standard Ten: This standard asks that the college look at all aspects of governance and administration, including the roles played by all constituencies of the college community. It asks that the college look at the policies and practices of governing board and the college administration, as well as the role of faculty, staff and students in governance.

Some Suggestions:

A source of evidence on governing board activities are minutes of board meetings. These minutes document all aspects of what the Board does. Another good source of evidence is the Board Policy Manual.

The functions of the CEO can be found in documents that describe the role and responsibilities of the position. The same is true for other administrators.

Evaluate the mission, vision, and values articulated by top leadership.

Look for evidence that senior leaders have created a system that provides good communication throughout the organization.

Evaluation procedures for administrators can help document how the institution is assessing the effectiveness of its leadership and the leadership skills of its administrators.

Assess how governance systems of the institution review progress towards planned goals.

Minutes of the Academic Senate will help in documenting the role of faculty in institutional governance. Review faculty membership on standing committees of the college.

A way to document institutional support for faculty participation in governance is to review faculty assignments.

Minutes of institutional committees can help document the participation of staff and students in governance.

In multi-college districts or systems, the college is asked to document the role of the district or system CEO. This can be done in much the same manner as with the institutional CEO.

In multi-college districts or systems, look carefully at the services provided by the district or system. Show how these services provide support for college goals.

Look at the relationship among the colleges of the system/district.

Look at district-wide/system-wide committees to document how they provide for adequate communication between the college and the system/district.

THE EVALUATION SITE VISIT

Organization for the Visit

Preparations for the evaluation team's visit should focus on facilitating the team's work. The Accreditation Liaison Officer, or designee, assumes responsibility for the logistical aspects of the team's visit by arranging lodging and meals, local transportation for team members, clerical and computer assistance, and identification of a central headquarters, or "team room". Sometime prior to the team visit, the evaluation team chairperson communicates with the person in charge of logistical arrangements to confirm details.

Since the time allotted for a team visit is very short, the institution must be careful not to plan unnecessary activities that will use up the limited time. The institution may host a simple activity on campus to introduce the team to members of the board, college staff, students, or others directly involved in the self study process, but the Commission discourages more elaborate social activity. The college community should be given advanced notice about the timing, nature, and purpose of the team visit and be urged to provide support for the team members.

The actual visit occurs while the college is in session, usually during the middle of the week. Since the visitation date is set many months prior to the visit, key campus personnel should arrange to be on campus and available to meet with team members. These persons include the college CEO, administrators, department heads or coordinators, persons who had substantial responsibility for the self study, representatives of the Academic Senate, and employee collective bargaining units (if applicable). An open meeting for members of the campus community who wish to talk to the team is typically scheduled. Governing board members are also expected to be available for meeting with the team. If there is a board meeting during the visit, team members often attend.

The evaluation team requires a well organized team room located in a central place affording privacy for confidential discussions and convenience for the team and college staff. The room should contain all of the studies and supporting documents relevant to the self study, indexed to the sections of the Self Study Report. A staff person should be available nearby to locate any additional documents, set up appointments, receive messages, and assist the team. The team room should be equipped with computers, printers, and an ample supply of formatted diskettes.

Format of the Visit

The flow of the evaluation visit is managed by the team chair and reflects the nature of the self study and the needs of the institution. Generally, there is an introduction of the team members to key staff members, time for team members to meet with individuals or small groups, time for classroom or program visits, time for an open meeting, time for team meetings and writing, and time for an exit report to the college staff. If the institution has off-campus program sites, team members may need to schedule time to visit them.

The final evaluation visit activity is the meeting of the team chair with the CEO and with members of the college to share brief observations, comments, and major findings based on the team's evaluation. The team's recommendation to the Accrediting Commission regarding the status of the college is not disclosed at this time.

The Porterfield Statement

Though written some time ago, this brief document is still a viable statement on the role and function of a visiting team. It is included as Appendix D as a means of illuminating what the College can expect. This is a document that can be distributed campus-wide before the team visit and used in preparing the Governing Board for the visit.

Post Evaluation Visit Activities

Approximately two weeks after the visit, a draft of the team report is sent to the CEO for correction of factual errors and to the team for review and comment. After the report has been reviewed by team members and submitted by the team chair to the Accrediting Commission office, a copy of the final report is sent to the CEO prior to the Commission meeting at which action is to be taken. Thus, the institution will be made aware of the team's recommendations on the standards before the final action letter is received from the Commission.

The evaluation team's confidential recommendation to the Commission regarding the accredited status of the institution is not revealed in the team report.

The steering committee should meet to "debrief" the visit and the recommendations and to begin the process of integrating the results of the self study process into the ongoing planning and evaluation activities of the institution.

REGULAR REPORTS TO THE COMMISSION

MIDTERM REPORT

In the third year following the evaluation team visit, all institutions are expected to submit a progress report cataloguing the institution's responses to the evaluation team recommendations. The Midterm Report addresses each of the recommendations made by the team by providing: a description of the response, an assessment of the progress made in fulfilling the team's recommendations, and a plan for the activities expected to be completed before the next comprehensive self study and evaluation visit. Should the college not agree with a recommendation made by the team, the college is obligated to provide a rationale for its disagreement. The institution is also expected to include a summary of progress made in areas identified in its self study. In addition to the basic responses, the Commission may ask for special focus on a small number of key recommendations. The action letter sent after the Commission meeting details these expectations.

Format and Content

1. Cover Sheet. The cover sheet includes the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Midterm Report.

2. Table of Contents.

3. Statement of Report Preparation. This statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer, describes the process used in the preparation of the report, and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval. Midterm Reports should be approved by the Governing Board prior to submission to the Commission.

4. Responses to Team Recommendations and Commission Action Letter. Each recommendation made by the previous evaluation team should be addressed in terms of the institution's response, an assessment of progress made, and a plan or forecast of activities expected to be accomplished by the next comprehensive self study and visit. If an institution disagrees with a recommendation, the explanation or rationale should be provided here.

5. Summary discussion of self-identified issues. In the Planning Agenda sections of each self study, institutions typically report on areas needing improvement and plans of action or other activities that they themselves intend to address, but which do not result in a formal team recommendation. Institutions should provide a brief narrative describing the progress--or abandonment--of these self-identified issues.

Midterm reports are normally due by November 1 in the third year after the comprehensive evaluation visit. The college will receive information about the need to prepare the Midterm Report about one year before it is due.

ANNUAL REPORT

This report form is distributed in early March with the annual fee statement. Typically, the Annual Report informs the Commission briefly about such matters as:

- program additions and deletions
- off-campus center operations
- contract education
- assessment of student outcomes activities
- planning
- significant institutional changes

In addition, the Annual Report updates WASC and ACCJC Directory information. This information is used regionally and nationally in published directories receiving wide circulation.

SPECIAL REPORTS

THE INTERIM REPORT

An Interim Report may be requested by the Commission for special purposes and may be followed by a limited visit. An Interim Report is not a comprehensive evaluation. In an Interim Report, the institution is expected to provide information and analysis regarding the specific concerns identified by the Commission. If the report is to be followed by a limited visit, the scope of the visit is determined by the concern(s) identified by the Commission and may include secondary areas that relate to these issues. In such instances, both the report of the interim visiting team and Commission action taken regarding it will be provided to the next comprehensive evaluation team. Collectively, the recommendations of both the last comprehensive team and any interim team form the body of recommendations for response in the next Midterm Report and/or comprehensive self study.

Format and Content

1. Cover Sheet. The cover sheet should include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is an **Interim Report**.

2. Table of Contents.

3. Statement on Report Preparation. The statement describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval. Interim Reports should be approved by the Governing Board prior to submission to the Commission.

4. Response to the Request of the Commission in the Action Letter. Each area identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should describe progress in each area, analyze the results obtained to date, and indicate what additional plans or actions the institution will make. Information about changes since the last visit should be provided as context for understanding the specific areas about which the report has been requested.

5. Report Distribution. Four sets of the report are sent directly to the Commission office. If an interim visit is scheduled, the college should send a copy directly to each team member.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORTS

A substantive change in an accredited institution is a change that significantly affects the nature of the institution, its quality, its objectives and educational programs, its scope, its control, or the allocation of its resources. Examples of substantive changes include, but are not limited to the following:

- Changes in an institution's private or public character
- Changes in form of control of the institution, including change of ownership or merger
- Offering programs at a more advanced level
- A move to a new location
- Establishment of major off-campus or international units
- Offering courses or programs outside the geographic region served by the institution at the time of the previous evaluation or outside the WASC region, including international sites
- Addition of educational activities representing significant departure in terms of content or method of delivering such as distance learning, correspondence courses, or credit by examination (See Standard Four).
- Programs offered for the institution by non-regionally accredited organizations
- Changes in purposes and/educational objectives operative at the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including changes in constituencies or clientele.

An institution considering a substantive change or unsure if a contemplated action constitutes a substantive change should refer to the policy statements in the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition and consult with the Commission through the Executive Director. Colleges should be aware that substantive change may involve a review of the accredited status of the institution by the Commission as well as a site visit.

Format and Content

1. Cover Sheet. The cover sheet includes the date of submission, name and address of the institution, and the title, **Substantive Change Report**.

2. Table of Contents.

3. Analysis of the Proposed Change.

   1. The College should formulate a concise statement of the proposed change and the reasons for it. The statement should include a description of the planning process leading to the request for the change, how the change relates to the institution's stated mission, and the assessment of needs and resources which has taken place.

   2. The statement should include evidence that the institution has any necessary internal or external approvals. The statement should state clearly what faculty, administrative, governing board or regulatory agency approvals are needed and provide evidence that any legal requirements have been met.

   3. Evidence that the educational purposes of the change are clear and appropriate should be provided. Institutions should also include evidence that all accreditation standards are fulfilled by the change and that all Commission policies are addressed. Where appropriate, consult the Commission policies relating to:

      Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Organizations
      Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals
      Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Delivered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs

      These policies are found in the Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, 1996 Edition.

   4. The College should provide an analysis of the anticipated effect of the proposed change on the rest of the institution. The institution should address whether or not the proposed change will have an effect on the ability of the institution to continue to be able to meet the criteria for eligibility, and therefore, continued accreditation status.

   5. Evidence that the institution has provided adequate human, financial, and physical resources and processes to initiate, maintain, and monitor the change and to assure that the activities undertaken are accomplished with acceptable quality should be provided.

Depending on the nature of the change, the Commission may require more detailed formation. The institution should consult with the Executive Director to determine what further, if any, information is needed.

THE SHOW CAUSE REPORT

When the Commission finds an institution to be in substantial non-compliance with its criteria or policies, or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission, the Commission may require the institution to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period. In such cases the burden of proof will rest with the institution to demonstrate why its accreditation should be continued. While under a show cause order, the institution will be subject to special scrutiny by the Commission, including a requirement to submit periodic prescribed reports and special visit(s) by representatives of the Commission. The accredited status of the institution continues during the period of the show cause order. The Show Cause Report provides the institution with an opportunity to respond to the Commission.

Format and Content

1. Cover Sheet. The cover sheet should include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a **Show Cause Report**.

2. Table of Contents.

3. Statement of Report Preparation. The statement describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval. Show Cause reports should be approved by the Governing Board prior to submission to the Commission.

4. Response to the Request of the Commission in the Action Letter. Each area identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should demonstrate progress in each area, detail and analyze results obtained to date, and provide evidence to the Commission that the institution is in compliance with Commission criteria, and that the institution has responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission.

5. Report Distribution. Four sets of the report are sent directly to the Commission office. The college should send a copy directly to team members scheduled to visit.

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21. Criteria and Measures of Institutional Effectiveness. 1988. Santa Ana, CA: Rancho Santiago College, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, California Association of Community Colleges, California Community College Trustees, Association of California Community College Administrators.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE COVER SHEET

Whatever Community College
(name of institution)

Institutional Self Study in Support of Reaffirmation of Accreditation
or in Support of an Application for Candidacy
or in Support of an Application for Accreditation
(notation of reason for self study)

Submitted by

Whatever Community College
6470 River Road
Wherever, California 95409
(address of institution)

to

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Date Submitted

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CERTIFICATION

CERTIFICATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF STUDY REPORT

(To be inserted in the Report)

Date _____

TO: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

FROM: _____
Name of Institution

_____
Address

_____

This Institutional Self Study Report is submitted for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community, and we believe the Self Study Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

Signed _____
Name Chief Executive Officer

_____ _____
Name Chairperson, Governing Board

_____
Name Title Representing

_____
Name Title Representing

_____
Name Title Representing

APPENDIX C

DOCUMENTATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISITS
(Candidacy, Accreditation, Reaffirmation of Accreditation)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A list of the supporting documents to be provided for use by the evaluation team should be included with the self study report. Those marked (x) should be included with the self study mailed to the team and the Commission office. The remaining documents should be available in the on-campus team workroom during the visit. Institutions should feel free to add additional documents which will be useful to the team. There should be an index for ease of reference.

This list of supporting documents is only a guideline. Institutions should add documentary information appropriate to their situation. **Anything referred to in the self study should be in the documents list and available to the evaluation team.**

STANDARD ONE: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

(x) 1. Catalog

2. Board adopted statements of institutional mission

3. Articles of incorporation or charter (private institutions)

4. Copy of institutional/system mission if delineated in legislation

STANDARD TWO: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

1. Catalog

2. Brochures, handbooks, print and media public information, Internet or other electronic information sites and policies concerning their development, use, and access

3. Statements or policies on academic freedom, codes of staff and student conduct (if any), and academic honesty

4. Policies on athletics

STANDARD THREE: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1. Research and evaluation, planning, and outcomes assessment documents

2. Program review documents and studies, including those produced to respond to other agencies or reporting requirements.

3. Institutional research and findings

4. Evaluation of research, evaluation, and planning processes

STANDARD FOUR: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

1. Description of curriculum development bodies and current minutes

(x) 2. Organizational chart for educational programs

3. Self study and evaluation reports from external reviews, the most recent professional and/or institutional accreditation visits and documentation of resulting institutional actions

4. Statements of expected learning outcomes for degree and/or certificate programs

5. Course outlines and objectives for all programs

6. Written philosophy and rationale for the general education program

7. Articulation agreements

8. Follow-up studies on transfer and vocational students

9. Program advisory committee rosters and minutes

(x) 10. Listing of off-campus programs, directors, sites, and enrollments

11. Catalogs, brochures, announcements, and class schedules for special programs and Community Education Programs

12. Policies regarding the award of credit based on prior experiential learning, including a report on the amount of such credit awarded for the past two years

13. A copy of Memorandum of Understanding for programs offered on military bases or for military agencies

14. Copies of brochures and announcements and any contractual agreements with other institutions, foreign partners, or travel agencies for study abroad, study-travel programs, or international operations, summaries of enrollments and discussion of financial arrangements

15. Contracts with other organizations that provide instruction for the college

16. Results of program review and curriculum evaluation activities

17. Transfer of credit policy

18. Distance education and International instruction documents

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Student Handbook

(x) 2. Summaries of student characteristics that give the reader a concept of the nature of the student body

(x) 3. Organization chart for student services

4. Sample copies of student publications

5. Policies on student conduct, rights, and responsibilities

6. Copies of published statements regarding admission criteria, and other policies related to attending the institution

7. Policies on student fees and refunds

8. Statistics on student financial aid, including loan default rates and management plans

9. The most recent financial aid reviews conducted by state and federal agencies

10. Any program review documents for student services, including those conducted by state and federal agencies

11. Catalog, brochures, and other documents prepared by the institution to recruit or inform students

12. The institution's Matriculation Plan (California Community Colleges)

13. Copies of student record retention policies and evaluation of them

14. Results of program reviews and student development and support evaluations

STANDARD SIX: INFORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

1. Budget for the library and instructional support services
2. Statistics on use of library and learning resources facilities and services
3. Data on user satisfaction
4. Data concerning number and assignment of staff to support learning resources
5. Curriculum materials for bibliographic instruction
6. Printed materials that describe for students the hours and services provided by learning resources, including those for sites or service arrangements other than the main campus
7. Formal, written agreements with other libraries or learning resource providers
8. Collection development and weeding policies
9. List of data bases, service or other learning resources to which students and faculty have access
10. Results of program reviews or evaluations of information and learning resources

STANDARD SEVEN: FACULTY AND STAFF

(x) 1. Statistics available concerning faculty, staff, and administration characteristics, such as gender, ethnic minorities, full-time, and part-time status

2. Faculty handbook, including personnel policies and procedures
3. Collective bargaining agreements, if applicable
4. List of faculty with degrees earned, unless catalog list is up-to-date
5. Staff handbook
6. Salary schedules
7. Affirmative action policy and plan
8. Criteria and procedures for employing, evaluating, and compensating faculty in special programs such as off-campus, study abroad, study travel, non-credit

programs and programs provided by contract with other organizations

9. Doctrinal statements required for employment if any (Church-related institutions)

10. Policies and procedures for evaluation of faculty, administrators, and support staff

11. Documents describing staff development activities

12. Criteria and procedures for selection of faculty, administrators, and support staff

13. Policies regarding retention of personnel records and confidentiality

14. Results of the reviews of the effectiveness of personnel programs and services

STANDARD EIGHT: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

1. The master plan for campus development

2. Policies of safety, security, and energy conservation which are related to physical facilities and equipment

3. Equipment inventory and replacement policy

4. Facility management plans for all instructional or services locations

5. Results of the evaluations of the effectiveness of the institutional physical resources in support of student learning

STANDARD NINE: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Institutions that are part of a multi-unit system or district should provide documents pertaining both to the campus/college and to the system/district budget.

1. Institutional budget

2. Institutional financial plan, including justification of tuition and fees for those institutions that determine these amounts

3. Latest report of the independent auditor

4. Documents illustrating budgetary control

5. Foundation documents

6. Auxiliary organization documents

7. Investment policies and performance documents

8. Risk management and emergency funding plans and policies

9. Statements of future financial obligations and funding plans

10. Results of the evaluations of the effectiveness of the institutional financial resources in support of student learning

STANDARD TEN: GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

In multi-unit districts and/or systems, documents should be provided for both the campus/college and the system/district entities as appropriate

1. Board policy and Procedures Manual

(x) 2. Chart of the institutional administrative organization

3. Manual of administrative procedures

4. Copies of institutional governance policies and procedures

5. Faculty Handbook

6. Constitutions and by-laws of the faculty senate or other faculty governance entity as appropriate to the institution

7. Constitution and by-laws of support staff governance organizations

8. Student handbook or informational brochures

(x) 9. Chart showing the central or district office organization and functions in multi-campus/multi-college systems or districts, including the names of the persons holding each position

APPENDIX D

Porterfield statement

A TEAM CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES IS COMING TO EVALUATE US

WHAT MUST IT DO?

Reach a decision as to how well, overall, our college is doing what colleges like us are generally expected to do.

Make a judgment as to how well, overall, our college is doing what it claims to do.

Point out to us, and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, any notable strengths and weaknesses that could or do significantly affect the education of our students.

Recommend steps we might take to strengthen ourselves.

Evaluate the progress we have made in carrying out the recommendations of previous visiting committees.

Communicate its findings, judgements, and recommendations to the Accrediting Commission, which makes the actual decision about accreditation.

TO THIS END, WHAT WILL IT TRY TO DO?

Become as intimately acquainted with us as circumstances will permit.

Listen to any member of our college community (students or staff) who wishes to be heard. We must take the initiative.

Answer any questions we have about accreditation.

Be helpful rather than punitive.

Assure itself that there has been widespread participation in our self study.

Encourage sound innovation.

Distinguish between limited and individual problems, which must be resolved in other ways, and general problems, which could or do significantly affect the teaching and learning that goes on here.

WHAT WILL IT NOT TRY TO DO?

Visit every class or confer with each staff member, because time does not permit.

Resolve all of our problems. It can't.

WHAT WILL IT TRY NOT TO DO?

Let the biases of individual team members affect its evaluation of us or lead to witch hunting.

Be picayune or become embroiled in intramural conflicts.

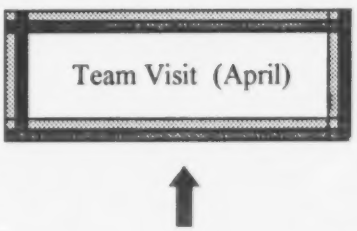
Usurp or interfere with the normal functions of faculty senates, professional organizations, the administration, or the governing board.

Prepared by John H. Porterfield, Retired Member of the Teaching Faculty, Diablo Valley College and Former Member, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

APPENDIX E

SELF STUDY TIMETABLE

To determine a timetable for self study, work backwards from the evaluation team visit date. Be sure to factor in vacations and holidays. Please note that this is an example. A longer period of time is advisable and the time line should be more detailed



APPENDIX F

SELF STUDY CHECKLIST

___SELECTION OF SELF STUDY CHAIRS

___SELECTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE

___DECISION ON EDITOR(S)

___DECISION ON HOW TO APPROACH SELF STUDY

___DESIGN OF STUDY

___FORMATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES

___COMPLETION OF SUBCOMMITTEE TASKS

___DRAFTS OF INDIVIDUAL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS SUBMITTED

___PRELIMINARY SELF STUDY DRAFT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

___CAMPUS REVIEW OF SELF STUDY DRAFT

___FINAL SELF STUDY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

___SELF STUDY ADOPTED BY GOVERNING BOARD

___SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS TO TEAM MEMBERS AND ACCJC

___EVALUATION TEAM VISIT

APPENDIX G

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

A GUIDE FOR THE SELF STUDY

BACKGROUND

During the 1980s, all institutions of higher education were challenged by numerous external agencies and organizations to demonstrate their effectiveness in quantifiable, verifiable terms. The public's interest in holding institutions accountable for specific outcomes, especially for outcomes pertaining to student performance and success, was carried out in federal policies, state legislative mandates, and local requirements. Such measures were and are considered to be appropriate in evaluating both the public's and the student-consumer's investment in a college education. Rapidly changing student demographics underscored the need to measure progress in order to ensure that new, nontraditional student populations were being well served and well prepared.

Within the higher education community, there has been extensive attention to the purposes and methodologies of institutional effectiveness. In August 1992, the AB 1725 Accountability Task Force of the California Community Colleges Chancellor' Office issued its final report, "Accountability: An Investment of Quality", calling for greater efforts in institutional research and management information, a statewide approach to college accountability, and improved data bases for student transfer and student employment information. The California Community Colleges also provided the digest, "Criteria and Measures of Institutional Effectiveness", as a guide for local community colleges. The University of Hawaii Community Colleges, in conjunction with other Pacific Rim institutions, recently developed guidelines for assessing institutional effectiveness in its report, "Comparative Assessment of Performance Guidelines", offering criteria and indicators for program review as well as for establishing the need for programs.

Accrediting associations also joined this movement, viewing it as a means to strengthen the self-assessment and quality-assurance processes that are at the heart of the process of peer review. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) published resource papers for its Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness, "Accreditation, Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness", and the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities published a resource manual, "Achieving Institutional Effectiveness Through Assessment". Those wishing a complete history and overview of the institutional effectiveness movement may wish to read A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation by James Nichols (1991, New York, Agathon Press).

PREPARING FOR THE SELF STUDY

As part of its recent revision of the standards for accreditation, the WASC Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges developed new criteria and assigned a greater emphasis to all aspects of institutional effectiveness, devoting one entire standard to this consideration and infusing other standards with similar issues. Because of the importance and pervasive nature of these issues, institutions are encouraged to review their overall strategy for addressing all aspects of institutional effectiveness prior to embarking upon a consideration of the individual standards and sections of the self study.

Colleges in multi-college systems should review their strategy in close coordination with their district or system office as well as with other colleges within the system where comparable data may be sought during simultaneous or coordinated evaluating visits.

CONDUCTING THE SELF STUDY

Each institution will approach the documentation of institutional effectiveness in its own way. Since references to planning and institutional effectiveness are found throughout the accreditation standards, the following general guidelines have been developed to assist institutions in identifying the types of information that are expected when discussing planning and effectiveness so that clear documentation is provided to visiting teams and the Commission in the self-study.

1. Purposes and Mission. Perhaps the largest question raised in the review of institutional effectiveness is the degree of the institution's success in achieving its basic purposes and mission. Too often institutional mission is either taken for granted or the institution is assumed to be achieving its stated ends. Institutions should have in place a regular means of updating their mission as community needs change, of assessing community needs, and of assessing success in meeting those needs. The self study process invites a thorough review and reassessment of institutional mission within the context of institutional effectiveness.

In preparing a self study, institutions should seek answers to questions such as the following:

- When was the last "periodic reexamination" of the statement of purposes conducted? How was it conducted, and by whom? What changes were made, and why?
- What factors delimit the program offerings and resource allocation?
- How is the mission statement used in the development of programs and the allocation of resources?

Institutions sometimes view staff evaluation primarily as an employee relations or contractual issue; however, effective evaluation should be connected to institutional purposes and the effectiveness of the staff in supporting those purposes.

Similarly, staff development can play an important role in the institution's ability to implement plans and effectively meet the changing needs of students. The self study should clearly describe and evaluate the relationship of evaluation and staff development to the institution's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

Documentation: The self study should specifically describe and evaluate the institutional review of the college's mission statement (Standard one). While many institutions continue to serve the same objectives over time, the self study should be used as an opportunity to evaluate, revise, and update the way the institution expresses those objectives. Therefore, the self study should make specific references to the mission statement in the description and analysis of the institution's response to each of the accreditation standards. Essentially, the mission statement should be viewed as the basic set of criteria against which institutional effectiveness is measured. Planning is designed to achieve the goals established in the mission statement and programs and services are the core activities designed to accomplish the mission. Data is collected to assess the effectiveness of the planning and programs in accomplishing the various aspects of the mission. The self study documents the institution's coordinated effectiveness in accomplishing its mission using planning, programs and services, and various forms of data.

2. Planning. One hallmark of institutional effectiveness is planning; *i.e.*, the manner in which institutions are guided in achieving specified goals. Planning may take place in a systematic, sophisticated manner in some institutions. Others may have multiple informal planning activities for discrete areas of the operation but have no mechanism in place for comprehensive, institutional planning. Institutions preparing for the self study should begin by taking an inventory of all planning efforts underway and outlining the relationship of these planning efforts to each other and to the whole. The effectiveness of planning will increase by the degree to which it actually becomes institutional rather than focused upon areas within the institution; this will be the challenge for colleges to address in their action plans.

- How does the institution define planning? How does it distinguish among planning to plan, planning processes, and planning outcomes?
- How does the institution insure that planning is comprehensive in scope, systematic in process, and inclusive in participation ?
- What does the institution do with the results of its planning activities?

Documentation: Self studies should clearly detail the names and purposes of major planning documents and procedures. The discussion of planning should articulate (1) the processes used in planning with reference to long- and short-term responsibilities; (2) the criteria used for planning; (3) the relation of planning to the institution's mission; (4) how plans are implemented; (5) what procedures have been established to review and revise plans and implementation schedules; (6) what provisions have been made to review the effectiveness of the planning processes.

In addition, the self study should describe and evaluate the involvement of various constituencies within the institution that have been engaged in planning based on their authority, representativeness, expertise, and their responsibilities for the implementation of the plans. The effectiveness of planning and the implementation of plans should be evaluated by the parties directly involved in the processes as well as the members of the institution at-large.

3. Data. Measurable outcomes, measurable progress and other issues requiring quantitative analysis must rely upon a body of undisputed facts and an accepted methodology for interpreting these institutional facts. Prior to beginning the self study, institutions need to determine what data and what methodologies will be used to demonstrate institutional effectiveness. While anecdotal evidence has value, it is a less than reliable measure for analytical purposes. Not all evidence needs to be quantitative. Systematically gathered qualitative evidence such as classroom based research, histories and archival analyses are also appropriate.

Efforts should also be made to reconcile differences in data that may occur when independent studies are undertaken on individual areas of the institution. In multi-college systems, it is of critical importance that system and institutional data be the same and emanate from the same source.

Colleges frequently overlook a wealth of data they have on student outcomes by not coordinating the analysis of data among service areas within the institution. For example, various student services offices have data relevant to academic programs (*e.g.*, comparative success rates, student demographics). Multiple measures for related outcomes can be useful for institutions which serve a broad array of students who have different educational objectives. Transfer rates, general education certification, degree attainment, vocational certification and job placement outcomes can all be used as major educational attainment measures.

Data on more specific measures of progress can also provide a quantitative basis for evaluating effectiveness. For example, rates of students' progression from developmental to regular academic course work, rates of students' progression into courses with skills or content prerequisites, and success rates for students in courses or programs related to specific competencies can be used to document institutional effectiveness.

- What information already exists which will contribute to the analyses?

- Where is it? Who will obtain it?

- What are efficient and effective ways of augmenting effectiveness data?

Documentation: The self-study provides an excellent opportunity to collect data, particularly satisfaction surveys from students and/or staff. However, nothing in the standards nor the Commission Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual requires survey data for the self study. In fact, the self study should document the way the institution uses all types of data to evaluate programs and services and to assess effectiveness as a part of the regular operating procedures within the college. There should be clear documentation in the self study of the types of data collected, the purposes for which the data are collected, the criteria used to assess the data, and the role that the assessment plays in program planning, revision, and implementation.

While the self study should include data that supports an assessment of the institution's effectiveness by the visiting team and the Commission, the use of reliable data to support institutional planning and decision-making is a fundamental tool for insuring institutional effectiveness. The self study should describe and evaluate the use of quantitative and qualitative data in the on-going activities of the college.

4. Programs and Services. Colleges and institutions accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges offer educational programs and support services for students. Whether the programmatic mission is narrow or broad, modest or extensive, institutions need to have a systematic means for evaluating program and service effectiveness through such measures as outcomes, progress and success. A process of program review and program plans based upon the outcomes of program review should be in place.

As the standards suggest, articulation is also related to curriculum planning and, therefore, articulation becomes an aspect of program review. Data for these standards are not restricted to transfer rates. Evaluation of the quantity and quality of articulation agreements is relevant. When the various aspects of articulation are placed in the context of the institution's mission, a measure of "institutional effectiveness" can be described and evaluated. A similar assessment can be made for vocational programs in terms of their relevance to job markets.

- What changes have occurred as a result of program reviews and how have those changes been evaluated?

- When was the last review of institutional and program articulation agreements and activities? What use was made of the outcomes?

- What measures do student services, support services, administration and the governing board use to evaluate programs and services?

Documentation. The processes used for the systematic review of programs and support services should be described and evaluated in the self study and reference should be made to the relevant documentation of those reviews.

The outcome measures used in program review should be described and evaluated in terms of the mission of the institution and the students it serves. The focus should be on learning, not simply on providing programs and service.

The relationship between program review and budget planning and implementation should be articulated and evaluated. Consideration of the fiscal implications of the results of program reviews should include short-term budgeting as well as long-term, financial planning for the institution.

APPENDIX H

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

POLICY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY
(Adopted January, 1994)

How an institution deals with diversity is an important indicator of its integrity and effectiveness. Institutions accredited by the Commission consider diversity issues in a thorough and professional manner. Every institution affiliated with the Commission is expected to provide and sustain an environment in which all persons in the college community can interact on a basis of accepting differences, respecting each individual and valuing diversity. Each institution is responsible for assessing the quality and diversity of its campus environment and for demonstrating how diversity is served by the goals and mission of the college and district. In addition, institutions must identify the processes that actively promote diversity in the everyday environment and the academic programs of the college. Accreditation teams will evaluate the condition of institutional diversity during the site visits and include findings and recommendations in written reports to the Accrediting Commission. The Commission Statement on Diversity is designed to guide institutions and evaluation teams in the self study and site visit process and to indicate how institution-wide reviews of issues of diversity should be documented in the self study and visiting team reports. The Accrediting Commission, taking into account the mission of the institution and the entirety of the self study and peer review processes, will evaluate the institution's effectiveness in addressing issues of diversity.

January 11, 1994

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

PREAMBLE

Diversity itself is an increasingly comprehensive term, encompassing the diversity of institutions with their unique mission statements; the diversity of ethnic and gender backgrounds of faculty, administration, staff and student bodies; and the diversity of cultures in the larger communities. This broad conception includes the social climate on campus as well as the intellectual climate. It extends to the curriculum, and includes awareness and understanding of diverse cultural values.

Within the individual institution, diversity can be incorporated into support structures and processes designed to ensure the inclusion of all members of the educational community. Attention to diversity is expressed by the institution's recognition that its programs and services must provide equal opportunity for all in order for the institution to effectively achieve its missions and goals. The diverse campus is one whose student body, faculty and staff are reflective of the broader community. It provides comprehensive curriculum that reflects the heterogeneous culture of that community. The institution also strives to remove all barriers to equal access to its programs and services by assessing the effectiveness of its programs and services in promoting the participation, retention, progress and success of all its students.

Additionally, the Commission is concerned that the concepts of diversity and affirmative action are often used interchangeably, leading to narrow, and often overly legalistic interpretations. Previous Commission statements speak of achieving and serving diversity. The Commission believes that diversity is an institutional condition, composed of many elements found throughout the institution in the programs and services, the curriculum, the physical setting, and the staff. Affirmative action, as used in the standards and policies of the Commission, refers to some of the plans, policies and implementation strategies utilized by institutions to achieve diversity. Thus, affirmative action is a program, one of many means to reach and support the desired goals.

The Commission serves a diverse group of institutions: private and public, large and small, comprehensive and specialized. Within the mission statements of all these colleges a common interest is explicit: preparing students for lives of effective participation in the civic culture of their communities as well as the rapidly changing world of work. The Commission believes that this commonality of mission is the foundation of its standards on diversity. Member institutions believe that institutions of higher education are places in which those who teach, work and learn are bound in a common enterprise which creates, protects, and promotes an active concern for the dignity and success of every individual. The Commission expects this active concern to be demonstrably evident in the life and climate of the institution.

ACCJC Standards and Diversity

This statement is designed to assist colleges developing self studies, to provide evaluation teams with clear statements of Commission expectations and to form a foundation for Commission decision making. The Commission intends that the statement will also serve to reaffirm the historic role of community and two year colleges as the primary access point to higher education for thousands of students. Throughout, the statement focuses on issues of institutional integrity, effectiveness, and climate. The language is that of inclusivity and participation, not that of divisiveness and separation.

Institutions conducting self studies need to be able to link the various elements of diversity together in order to develop a clear description of the status of diversity at the institution, to ask the analytical questions which will provide a meaningful assessment of diversity concerns, and to formulate planning agendas which will set the direction and priorities for institutional efforts.

Diversity standards are arranged in three clusters:

1. Diversity and Institutional Integrity, which expresses institutional mission and values;
2. Diversity and Institutional Effectiveness, which includes educational quality, programs, services, and activities;
3. Diversity and Institutional Climate, which encompasses all aspects of the teaching and learning environment.

Each cluster is discussed within the accreditation context, and examples of the analytical questions which could be asked for selected standards are provided. The statement is a guide to action and a stimulus for inquiry at each college as it carries out its accreditation activities. The complete text of the accreditation standards related to diversity is arranged by cluster.

By adopting a more thematic approach to developing the self study, colleges create an institution-wide perspective and broad based plans which recognize the multiple manifestations of diversity throughout the institution. At the very least, colleges are expected to forego frames of reference which define diversity solely as a personnel issue. These standards also encourage the college to focus more on the outcomes of institutional activities, and not exclusively on resources and processes.

Diversity and Institutional Integrity

Through the standards for institutional integrity, the college community asks itself what its mission is, for whom it exists, and what ends it serves. It assesses its faithfulness to its stated purposes. The standards which link institutional integrity and diversity issues are those which address the mission and core values of the institution. Some common approaches include policy reviews, formulation of analytical questions, information gathering to assess the extent and depth of understanding, and identification of areas in need of development. The challenge is to move beyond the presence of a policy or the existence of a glowing mission statement to an investigation of the impact of those written commitments in the life of the institution and the community.

The Commission stresses the importance of asking analytical questions to determine how an institution meets or exceeds the standards. For example, Standard 1, Institutional Mission, requires that an institution identify its constituencies, delineate the parameters of its mission, and determine the resource allocation priorities by which the mission will be carried out.

Analytical questions, which could be used by a college to assess whether or not it meets the standard, could include the following:

- What is our service area, and who is within it? What are the distribution, participation, and completion patterns among various types of students? How do we know if we are reaching those within the constituencies?

- How do we decide whether a program fits within our mission? How do we decide to start or stop a program or service?

- What is the method of allocating resources among programs and services? If the needs of a constituency change, how are those changes reflected in the allocation of resources?

The Commission standards of accreditation do not prescribe numbers, quotas or proportions. Institutions are expected to have plans in place to improve diversity, mechanisms for monitoring progress, a capability for analyzing results, and effective means for making informed decisions.

Diversity and Institutional Effectiveness

Just as the institutional integrity standards address what the institution claims to be, the Diversity and Institutional Effectiveness standards focus on what the college does in its educational curricula, programs, student services, and institutional operations. The standards are statements of good practice and serve as measures and indicators by which the institution may assess how well it is meeting its stated purposes and goals.
All of the standards assume that there is a relationship between the standards of good practice and institutional quality. The standards which relate to some aspect of diversity show how the programs, services and activities of and institution coalesce and contribute to achieving and serving diversity.

A curriculum which investigates the best expressions of a wide range of cultures and traditions exposes students to a broad and rich intellectual world. Teaching effectiveness demands that faculty are aware of various intellectual traditions and pedagogical approaches and that they display receptivity to the perspectives, experiences and learning styles of students. Learning effectiveness requires that students have opportunities to study multiple perspectives, and to interact with those holding different points of view in order to hone their analytical and evaluative skills.

Standard 4C., General Education, requires that educational programs address the several and distinct ways that students might demonstrate competence in core educational skills and their appreciation of the variety of human experience. Assessment of the institution's effectiveness in addressing diversity in general education might include questions such as:

- How do the curricula of academic skills subjects address differences of learning styles? What alternative methods are in place for students to demonstrate competence?
- What opportunities are available for fostering appreciation of cultural diversity and how are these incorporated into the curriculum?
- How do faculty review the curricula to assess the need for any changes?

Diversity and Institutional Climate

The Diversity and Institutional Climate standards address the atmosphere in which faculty, staff and students work and learn. This environment is critical to the effectiveness of an institution and embraces concern for equity, access, participation, retention, and for the attainment of educational and personal goals.

All institutions aspire to a campus environment of receptivity, inclusivity, and supportiveness. Important indicators of institutional quality are the ways these characteristics are displayed by members of the institution, the perceptions held by constituent individuals and groups, and the responses by the institution to challenges to the learning environment.

The standards include questions of representation, access, awareness, participation, and allocation of resources within the mission of the institution. This perspective requires the college to be more inclusive in considering who is affected by institutional culture and climate and to evaluate the learning environment in terms of the unique circumstances of each institution.

In order to provide and sustain a diverse campus climate, supportive interaction between staff and students, within and outside of class, is essential in achieving an atmosphere of understanding and appreciation of people and ideas that is conducive to learning excellence. A campus climate which fosters an interest in fairness and an understanding and respect for commonalities and differences prepares students to interact more successfully in a society and world characterized by cultural and social diversity.

An atmosphere which insures that candidates for positions are treated equitably, facilities that do not present barriers to participation, and governance processes which insure that the public interest is appropriately served are indicators of an attractive, hospitable college. Questions appropriate to this aspect of a self study include:

- What discussions have occurred which examine the strength and breadth of the college's efforts to address issues of student and staff equity?
- How are the college policies concerning employment equity carried out and what evaluations of those policies have occurred?
- In what ways is the governing board reflective of the public interest and what does the board do to assess its interactions with the various communities the college serves?
- How does the physical arrangement of the college enable, or limit, full participation in programs and services?

Commitment to achieving and serving diversity on our campuses requires attention to ethical principles, demographic configurations, citizenship and economic participation, enhancement of the educational experience, and sensitivity to group identification and values. Working together, the Commission and the institutions which constitute ACCJC embrace this opportunity to exercise leadership in promoting, achieving, and serving the diversity of the communities of which we are a part.

The accreditation process and the standards on which the Commission and colleges base their activities and decisions are dynamic and continually evolving. The Commission expects to incorporate the perspective of this statement and the experiences of the colleges and teams in the next Handbook of Accreditation and Policy Manual, and welcomes the thoughtful commentary and suggestions from all constituents.

ACCJC STANDARDS AND DIVERSITY

OVERVIEW: One of the central themes is the Commission's interest in the effectiveness of member institutions with respect to issues of diversity. As is clear by this rearrangement of the standards, the Commission views diversity as an institution-wide matter which touches many areas within the college. If the team needs to make statements and recommendations to the institution about diversity, this organization of the standards allows the team chair to address the college and the standards thematically.

I. Diversity and Institutional Integrity

Standard One: Institutional Mission

1. The institution has a statement of mission, adopted by the governing board which identifies the broad-based educational purposes it seeks to achieve.

2. The mission statement defines the students the institution intends to serve as well as the parameters under which programs can be offered and resources allocated.

Standard Two: Institutional Integrity

2. The institution has a readily available governing board-adopted policy protecting academic freedom and responsibility which states the institutional commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and fosters the integrity of the teaching-learning process.

4. Institutions which strive to instill specific beliefs or world views or to require codes of conduct of faculty, administrative and support staff, or students give clear prior notice of such policies.

6. The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

Standard Four: Educational Programs

Preamble: Standard Four is broadly applicable to all educational activities offered in the name of the institution, regardless of where, when or how presented, or by whom taught.

4A.1 The institution seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with its institutional mission and purposes and the demographics and economics of its community.

Standard Five: Student Support and Development

Preamble: The institution recruits and admits students appropriate to its programs. It identifies and serves the diverse needs of its students with educational programs and learning support services, and it fosters a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, and success.

3. The institution identifies the educational support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

5. Admissions and assessment instruments and placement practices are designed to minimize test and other bias and are regularly evaluated to assure effectiveness.

7. The institution, in keeping with its mission, creates and maintains a campus climate which serves and supports its diverse student population.

Standard Seven: Faculty and Staff

Preamble: The institution has sufficient qualified full-time and part-time faculty and staff to support its educational programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds by making positive efforts to foster such diversity.

II. Diversity and Institutional Effectiveness

Standard Three: Institutional Effectiveness

3A. Institutional Research and Evaluation

A.3 The institution has developed and implemented the means for evaluating how well, and in what ways, it accomplishes its mission and purposes.

A.4 The institution provides evidence that its program evaluations lead to improvement of programs and services.

3B. Institutional Planning

B.3 The institution engages in systematic and integrated educational, financial, physical, and human resources planning and implements changes to improve programs and services.

3C.1 The institution specifies intended institutional outcomes and has clear documentation of their achievement.

3C.2 The institution uses information from its evaluation and planning activities to communicate matters of quality assurance to the public.

3C.3 The institution systematically reviews and modifies, as appropriate, its institutional research efforts, evaluation processes, institutional plans, and planning processes to determine their ongoing utility for assessing institutional effectiveness.

Standard Four: Educational Programs

4A. General Provisions

A.1 The institution seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with its institutional mission and purposes and the demographics and economics of its community.

4C. General Education

4C.3 The general education program introduces the content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. The general education program provides the opportunity for students to develop the intellectual skills, information technology facility, affective and creative capabilities, social attitudes, and an appreciation for cultural diversity that will make them effective learners and citizens.

4C.4 Students completing the institution's general education program demonstrate competence in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis/logical thinking.

Standard Five: Student Support and Development

3. The institution identifies the educational support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

4. The institution involves students, as appropriate, in planning and evaluating student support and development services.

5. Admissions and assessment instruments and placement practices are designed to minimize test and other bias and are regularly evaluated to assure effectiveness.

Standard Six: Information and Learning Resources

General Provisions

1. Information and learning resources, and any equipment needed to access the holdings of libraries, media centers, computer centers, databases and other repositories are sufficient to support the courses, programs, and degrees wherever offered.

4. The institution has professionally qualified staff to provide appropriate support to users of information and learning resources, including training in the effective application of information technology to student learning.

Standard Seven: Faculty and Staff

Preamble: The institution has sufficient qualified full-time and part-time faculty and staff to support its educational programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds by making positive efforts to foster such diversity.

III. Diversity and Institutional Climate

Standard Two: Institutional Integrity

4. Institutions which strive to instill specific beliefs or world views or to require codes of conduct of faculty, administrative and support staff, or students give clear prior notice of such policies.

6. The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

Standard Five: Student Support and Development

Preamble: The institution recruits and admits students appropriate to its programs. It identifies and serves the diverse needs of its students with educational programs and learning support services, and it fosters a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, and success.

3. The institution identifies the educational support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

5. Admissions and assessment instruments and placement practices are designed to minimize test and other bias and are regularly evaluated to assure effectiveness.

7. The institution, in keeping with its mission, creates and maintains a campus climate which serves and supports its diverse student population.

8. The institution supports a co-curricular environment that fosters intellectual, ethical, and personal development for all of its students and encourage personal and civic responsibility.

Standard Six: Information and Learning Resources

The institution recruits and admits students appropriate to its programs. It identifies and serves the diverse needs of its students with educational programs and learning support services, and it fosters a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, and success.

Standard Seven: Faculty and Staff

Preamble: The institution has sufficient qualified full-time and part-time faculty and staff to support its educational programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds by making positive efforts to foster such diversity.

7D. General Personnel Provisions

D.1 The institution has and adheres to written policies ensuring fairness in all employment procedures.

D.2 The institution regularly assesses and reports its achievement of its employment equity objectives, consistent with the institutional mission.

D.3 Personnel policies and procedures affecting all categories of staff are systematically developed, clear, equitably administered, and available for information and review.

D.4 The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Personnel records are private, accurate, complete, and permanent.

Standard Eight: Physical Resources

3. Physical facilities at all site locations where courses, programs, and services are offered are constructed and maintained in accordance with the institution's obligation to ensure access, safety, security, and a healthful environment.